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THE MAGIC LAUGH

By

M. O. Kaplan

With Illustrations By

Frank M. Gregory

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Author of "Baby's Biography."

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Restrained by neither air nor space,
Until I reached the Sun.

Sole entrance to a vast estate.

High-walled 'gainst view or ken:

Within I saw an arch of gold,

The Solar chemist's den.

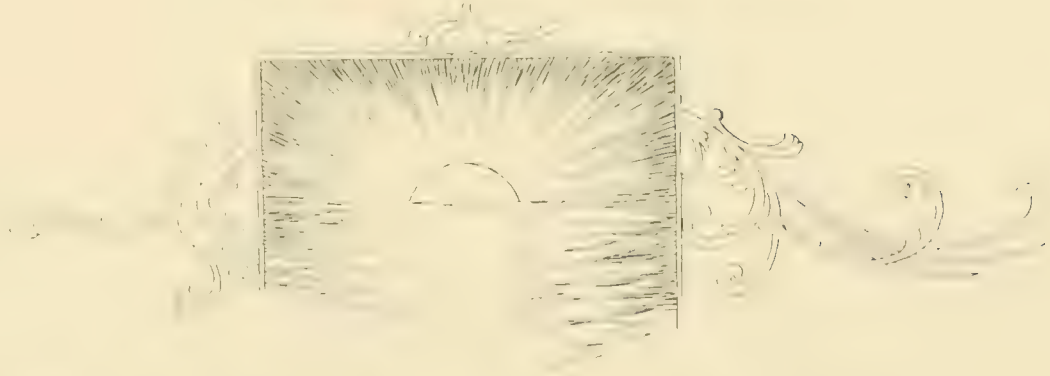
The room was charged with radiant light

And brilliant every nook.

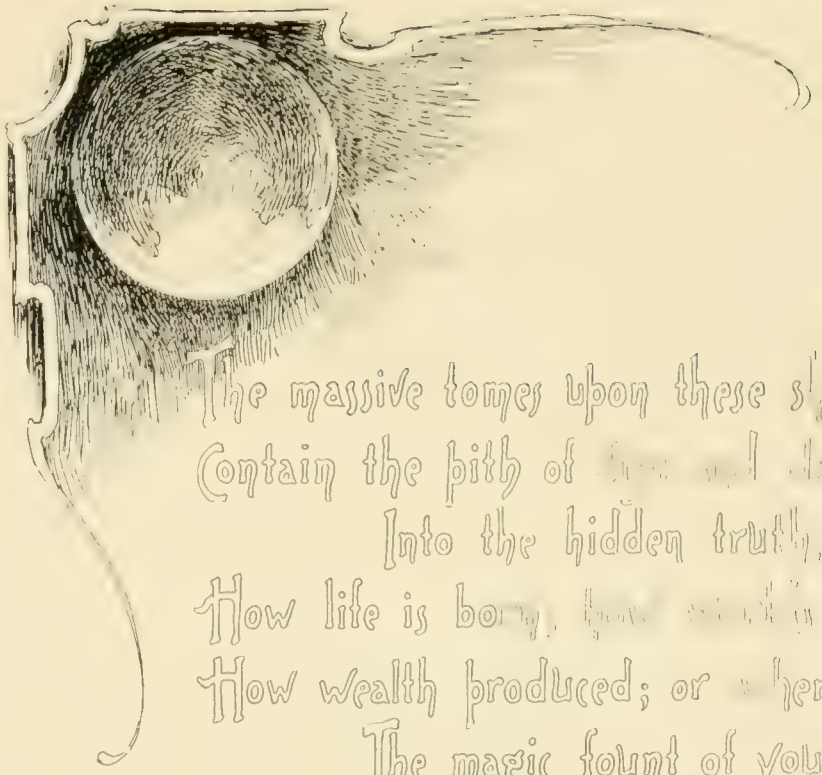
The shining, fine-haired grisly dogs,
Whose long-drawn, lightsome
Once yelled in eerie time,
Like wolves, upborne, on wind-driven sky,
Were brained, cats or dingoes lay
Like unburned funeral pyres.

Amid them all the chemist stood,
In scantly, grey and peaked hood,
And beard like driven snow;
His brow with thought's crown was graved,
His eyes with fire, and love was thawed,
His voice was sweet and low.

Quoth he, "My son, the eldest here,
The dragon's life must yield to me
From foes within or out;
And if there ought with life be near
That longed thy parents sore before,
I'll teach it them, nor doubt."



"When two are born upon the Sea
And here we first begin,
They'll cease not till his death.
If thou art awed by such a span,
Then mark that I'm no mortal man,
Who lives but by his breath."

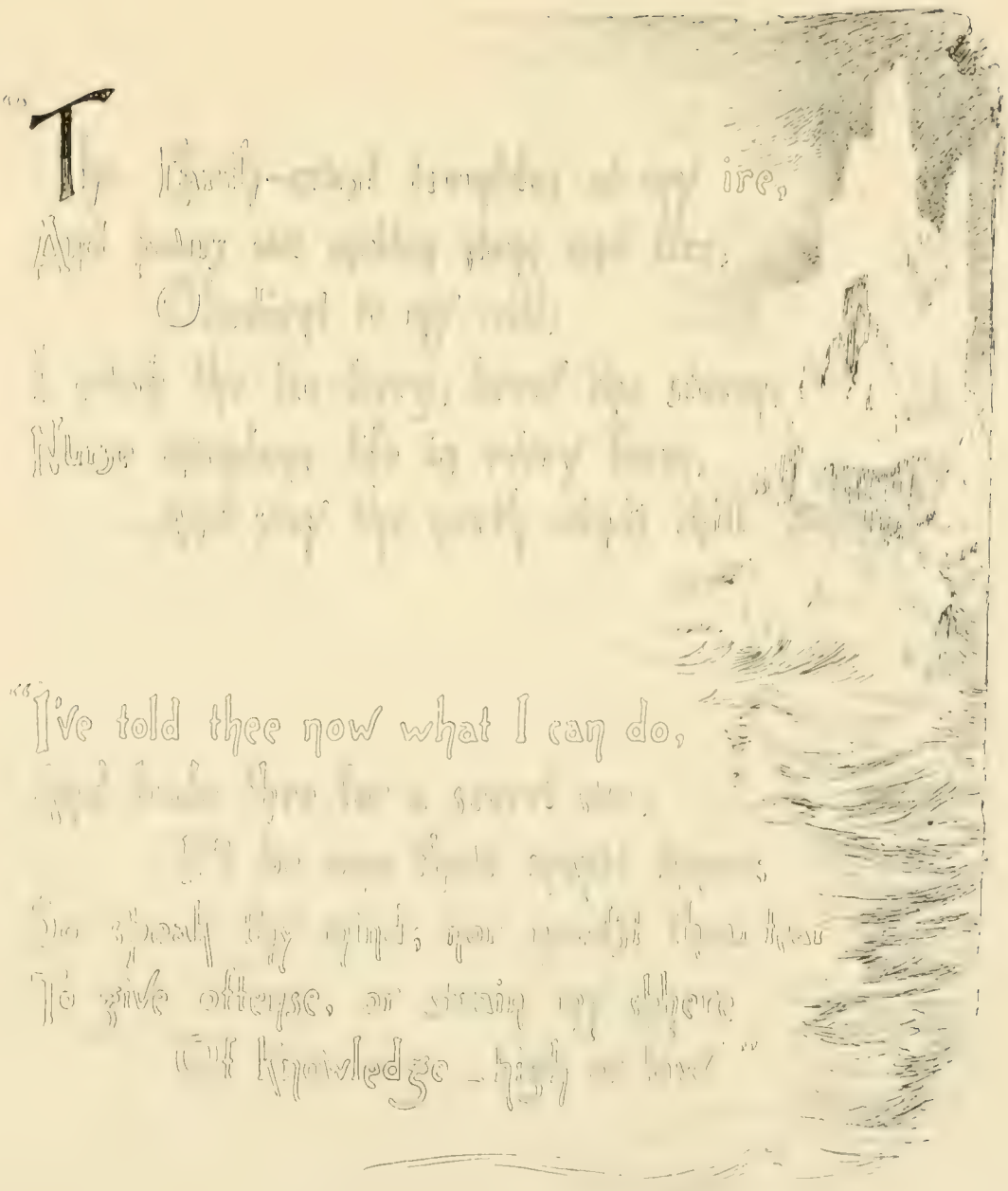


The massive tomes upon these shelves,
Contain the pith of [illegible]
Into the hidden truth,
How life is born, [illegible]
How wealth produced; or where is found
The magic fount of youth."

"The glittering gems which here you see,
Are children of my alchemy
Congealed from limpid dew;
For ages bathed in moon-hued light,
Until they clutch the colors bright,
That pierce their bodies through."

"You blaze-girt kettles veiled in mist,
Curtain the [illegible] wool
Of [illegible] light
And by its [illegible]
Mayst thou behold my [illegible]
When day dips into night."

"[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
Pure water for the lily and roll,
[illegible]"

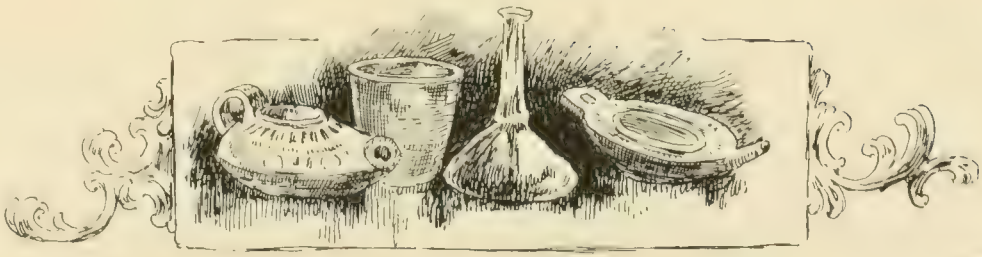


I heard my ear ringing.
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
No charm-taro, no sprite,
No human form was there,
It seemed to burst from vacant air.

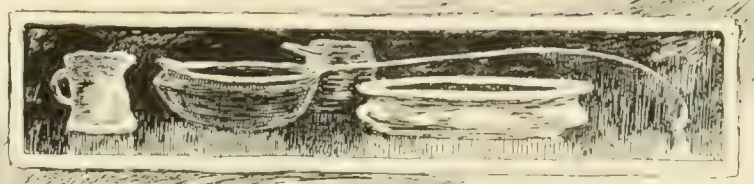
[illegible]
[illegible]
By a [illegible] echoes out
[illegible]
Upon a sea of pol[illegible]
[illegible]
Hark, hark, the wizards' wondrous gift

I scanned the walls, the arch, the floor,
Peered into every crack and pore,
The mystery to unwind.
Then for my ears were hushed quite,
My tongue and feet to quit my sleight,
Or ease my troubled mind.

Then I felt moved to make this speech,
And reckoned ways, that did beseech
Me here to test thy skill;
Produce that form thy pots and shaft,
That cheery, ribbling, silvery laugh,
That late the air did thrill."



So be it, spoke the [illegible]
[illegible]
It shall be quickly [illegible]
They seized the [illegible]
[illegible]
From out their niches [illegible]

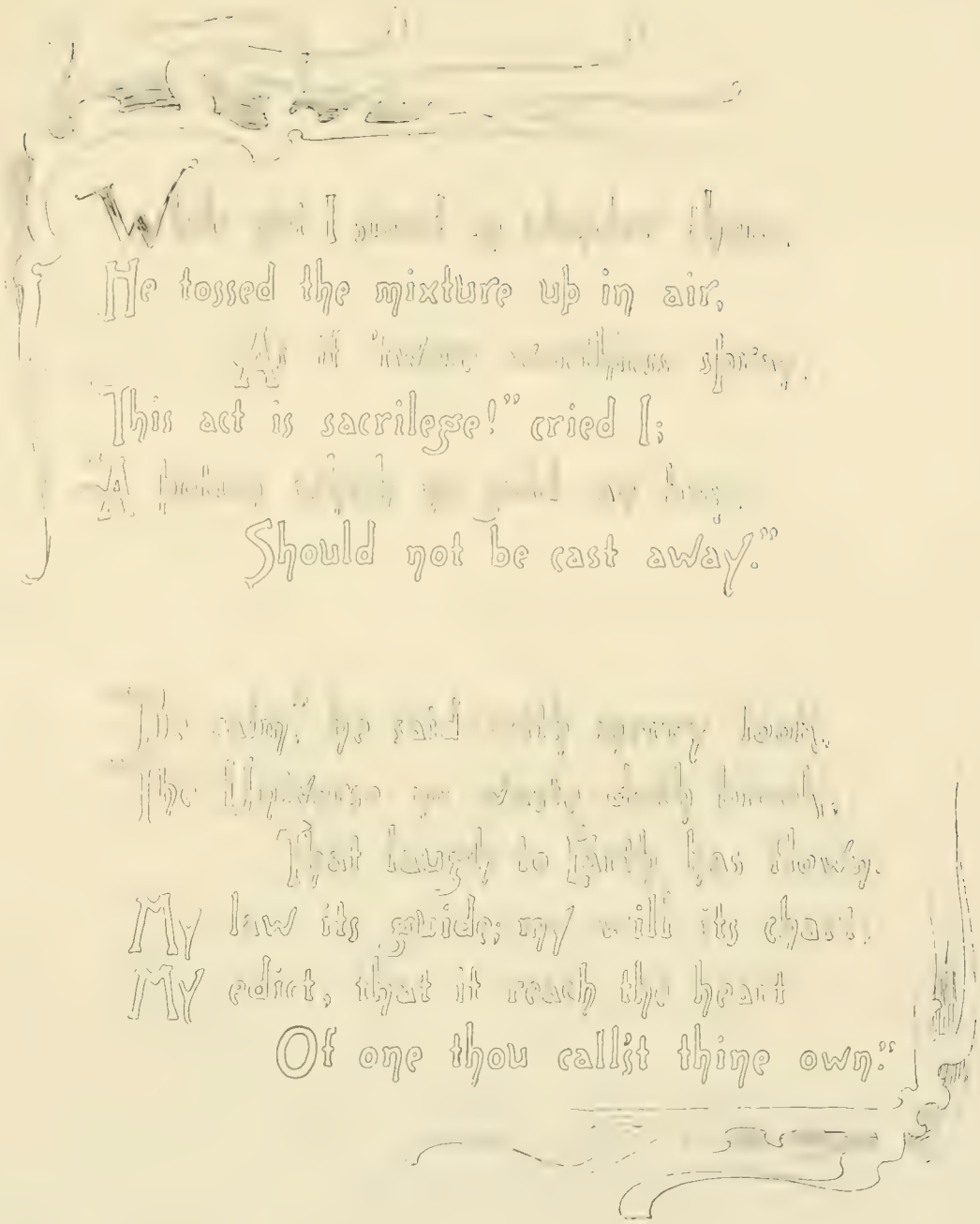


[illegible]
The log-book of [illegible];
And stamped the deed and day;
[illegible]
While I wrote down at his dictate,
The magic formula.

THE FORMULA

℞: of Sunshine bright — one vivid flash,
of Pearl's pale shade — one gentle dash;
of Brooklet's sound — one note or more,
of Diamond sparkles — three or four;
of Clear Bell's clang — one flowing wave,
of Ruby's gleam — one wee thin shave;
of Full Moon's beam — one tiny ray,
of Violet's dew — one fragrant spray;
of Silver's ring — one generous pinch,
of Starlight shaft — one half an inch;
The whole must then be seasoned well,
with echoes found where angels dwell.

When fully mixed and stirred and boiled,
Till steam in doublets upward coiled,
The Wizard raised his staff;
And as I viewed the seething mass,
Behold! from out its depth did pass,
That same bewitching laugh.



"Thou doubtst? Go trace it thro' the skies,
And see who draws the precious prize;
Then will thy mind's mist clear."
* * * * * * * * * *
Obeying fast, I downward bound,
Guided by that ecstatic sound
Still ringing in my ear.

I followed close upon its trend,
And joyfully I heard it wend
Toward my home, my shrine;
It passed the portal; welcome guest.
From Heaven's clime to me addressed—
Not me, but one of mine.

From study [illegible]
[illegible]
There safely to abide;
[illegible]
And she a willing bride.

[illegible]
But not that laugh, for that is still
Her Baby's [illegible]
'Twas she who woke us—hers the laugh,
The Chemist brewed with [illegible]
The Magic Laugh of Youth.

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